

Mishpachah Beit Midrash



—The Family House of Study— Examining the Parashat haShavuah by Thematic Analysis

Welcome to Mishpachah Beit Midrash, the Family House of Study. Each Shabbat¹ we gather in our home and study the Scriptures, specifically the Torah.² It's a fun time of receiving revelation from the Ruach HaKodesh³. Everyone joins in—adults and children—as we follow the Parashat HaShavuah⁴ schedule. We devote ourselves to studying the Torah because the Torah is the foundation for all of Scripture. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the Torah will help us more fully understand the rest of the Tanakh⁵ and the Brit Chadasha.⁶ Furthermore, as Yeshua stated Himself, the Torah teaches about Him. So we study the Torah in order to be drawn closer to Yeshua, the goal of the Torah.

As believers in the Messiah we have discovered the richness of the wisdom of the sages of Israel. These men, who devoted themselves to the study of the Torah, have left us a rich heritage. Part of that heritage is a unique method of learning and interpreting the Scriptures. It's called thematic analysis. In thematic analysis we search for the underlying theme/topic of each passage of Scripture. By studying Scriptures related by a common theme, line upon line and precept upon precept, the Scriptures open up to us in a unique manner that is clearly inspired by the Ruach HaKodesh. Passages that seemed obscure begin to make sense, and numerous levels of wisdom and understanding unfold before us.

Thematic analysis of Scripture is based on the following premises. 1) Moses wrote the Torah as five *separate* books as the Ruach HaKodesh inspired him. 2) Since Adonai had him separate those words into five separate books, we surmise that each book has a unique message or theme. 3) Within each book, the words are written with two paragraph-like divisions⁷ interrupting the flow of the words. 4) Since Adonai commanded Moshe to separate the individual books into smaller paragraph-like sections or *Parshiot*, we surmise that each Parsha was written as a separate unit because each of those Parshiot is trying to convey a unique thought, theme, concept or understanding. Therefore, since Adonai inspired these divisions, we think they are *VERY* important. We use these God-breathed divisions as the basis of our thematic analysis of Scripture. Once you begin to interpret the Scriptures thematically, you will immediately *SEE* that Adonai wrote His words in a manner consistent with the intent that they be interpreted thematically.

Here is an example of what the Parsha divisions look like ...

◦—Parsha Stumah (plural, stumot)—A paragraph-like break inspired by the Ruach HaKodesh, still preserved on kosher Torah Scrolls, where there are at least nine blank spaces between a word and the next word, all on the same line of text.

אלהים
אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים
אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים

▢—Parsha P'tuchah (plural, p'tuchot)—A paragraph-like break inspired by the Ruach HaKodesh, still preserved on kosher Torah Scrolls, where there are blank spaces extending to the end of a line of text and the subsequent text does not begin until the next line. (Hebrew is read from right to left)

אלהים
אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים
אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים אלהים

Our study is fun and interactive. Everyone contributes to the discussion. The lesson will incorporate information for children. They are responsible for answering questions and completing a WordSearch or some other fun, written activity. Children are naturals at midrashing and connecting Scriptures thematically!

After the Beit Midrash, we will say good-bye to the Shabbat with a traditional Havdalah gathering. So come join with us as we participate in the discussion that was started centuries ago! We feel we are privileged to participate in this ancient discussion, which has practical application for us today. These weekly teachings presuppose that you understand many Hebraic thought concepts. If you are unfamiliar with Torah study, please start by reading the five introductory articles pertaining to these weekly studies. You can find them at...

<http://restorationoftorah.org/>

Then, just click on the link entitled, *Mishpachah Beit Midrash's Parashat HaShavuah!*

This lesson is presented in a *self-study* format with lots of questions. To view my answers to the questions, simply mouse-over the word **Lekh Lekha** at the end of the questions (HTML) or the highlighted question marks (WORD). If you are viewing this in a regular e-mail format, the mouse-over function will not work; therefore, answers are also provided as footnotes so that you can print the article with answers. This article may also be found at the following link, which will also allow you to see my answers simply by using the mouse-over feature.

<http://www.restorationoftorah.org/images/torahportions/english/LekhLekha.pdf>

—Parashat HaShavuah—

לֵךְ לְךָ לֵךְ לְךָ

Lekh Lekha

(Go For Yourself)

Bereishit 12:1 – 17:27

(Genesis 12:1 – 17:27)

- 1 Genesis 12:1-9 ▢
- 2 Genesis 12:10-13:18 ▢
- 3 Genesis 14:1-24 ▢
- 4 Genesis 15:1-21 ▢
- 5 Genesis 16:1-16 ▢
- 6 Genesis 17:1-14 ▢
- 7 Genesis 17:15-27 ▢

Searching the Parshiot

Objective—Learn how to 1) uncover the theme of a passage, 2) relate it to other passages and 3) gain new insight on how to interpret the original passage based on its thematic connection to those other passages.

The Dominant Themes of Parashat Lekh Lekha

- I. Let us take a quick perusal through this week's sidra (Torah portion) to determine its major theme(s). To do so, it will be most helpful to make an outline. For each bullet, give a short title summarizing the thrust of the passage. Make the titles of your outlines as short as possible. Don't try to include too much detail when describing the most significant theme/topic of an outline bullet. This will force you to look for the most general words/phrases to describe the main point. Also, try to keep your answers to the following questions as short as possible.

- Genesis 12:1-3—Abram’s call. What is/are the major theme(s) of these verses?⁸ Note, the Holy One will do three specific things for Abram; 1) He will show him a special **land**, 2) He will make his descendants into a **great nation**, and 3) He will surround Abram with blessings. Now let’s see how often the themes of **land** and **descendants** recurs throughout our sidra.
- Genesis 12:4-9—Abram’s arrival in Canaan. What is the major theme of these verses?⁹ Note how often the word **land** is used in these few verses. It is a general principle that the theme of a passage is often related to repeated words.
- Genesis 12:10-20—Abram’s descent to and ascent from Egypt. Although the primary theme of this story pertains to events in Egypt, how is this passage related to the theme of the land of Canaan?¹⁰
- Genesis 13:1-18—Abram and Lot part ways. Why did they have to part ways?¹¹ As you can see, the theme of the land has reappeared again. What is/are the major theme(s) of Genesis 13:14-18?¹² Note how Genesis 13:14-15 and Genesis 13:17-18 are all about the land!
- Genesis 14:1-24—The war of the kings.
- Genesis 15:1-21—The covenant with Abram. What is the major theme of these verses?¹³
- Genesis 16:1-16—Ishmael and Hagar. What is the major theme of these verses?¹⁴
- Genesis 17:1-27—The covenant of circumcision. What is the major theme of these verses?¹⁵ It seems as if the theme of descendants has slowly replaced the theme of land as we progress through the sidra.

In general, Genesis 12:1-13:18 seems to focus on the theme of the land. Genesis 15:1-21 seems to give equal time to both themes of land and descendants. Genesis 16:1-17:27 seems to focus on the theme of descendants. As you can see, land and descendants have become the dominant themes of this sidra. These two themes will continue to dominate the remainder of the book of Genesis. Therefore, we must always keep them in mind as we try to interpret the narratives of this book. Remember, this book is primarily about a land for the future descendants/nation of Abram. As we continue to study the book of Genesis, allow these two themes to guide your interpretations.

Interpreting the Torah Thematically

- I. It is very important that you begin to interpret the Torah thematically. Only then will you begin to see its greatest wisdom. Let's see how thematic analysis can help us arrive at better interpretations of the Torah's narratives.
 - A. How are the stories of 1) Adam and Chava [Eve], 2) Cain and Abel, 3) the generation of the flood and 4) the generation of the Tower of Babel all thematically connected?¹⁶ That's right. These stories take us from Genesis 1-11. In Genesis 12, the Torah begins to focus on Abram. In fact, the rest of the book of Genesis is about Abram and his descendants!
 - B. Step back and look at the big picture. What is the main difference between the Holy One's dealings on earth between Genesis 1-11 and Genesis 12-50?¹⁷ Excellent. In Genesis 1-11, the Holy One is trying to work through mankind, in general. He had not

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [1]: Relocation to become a nation.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [2]: The land of Canaan.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [3]: A famine in the land of Canaan caused them to descend into Egypt.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [4]: The land could not support them dwelling together (Genesis 13:6).

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [5]: The major theme is the land. The secondary theme is descendants.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [6]: The dominant theme of Genesis 15:1-6 is **descendants**. The dominant theme of Genesis 15:7-21 is the **land!**

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [7]: Descendants. Why? Because Abram and Sarai are trying to figure a way that Abram can have descendants so that the Holy One’s promises will be fulfilled.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [8]: The promise of a son so that Abram can have a multitude of descendants.

Lekh Lekha

Comment [9]: They all involve the general theme of sin and punishment.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [10]: In Genesis 1-11 Adonai is dealing with mankind on a universal level, whereas in Genesis 12-50 He is dealing with an individual and his descendants.

revealed Himself to a particular individual. He revealed Himself to mankind universally, hoping that they would call upon Him universally.¹⁸ However, beginning in Genesis 12, this all changes. We know that as a whole, mankind failed to call upon the Holy One during the time span of Genesis 1-11; therefore, we can surmise that Adonai is trying to remedy this situation by starting with one man. Hopefully, Abram's descendants will be able to reveal the One and Only True Elohim (God) to mankind. I believe this is the thematic significance of the shift in emphasis when comparing Genesis 1-11 and Genesis 12-50.

1. As evidence to support this thematic interpretation, read [Genesis 12:1-3](#). Note that the blessing of Abraham will culminate in blessings to the entire world. Now read [Genesis 18:18-19](#). How is Genesis 18:18-19 thematically related to Genesis 12:1-3?¹⁹ Note that the blessing to the nations is to originate in a nation that practices justice and righteousness, something mankind has failed to produce heretofore. The picture is now clear. Mankind, as a whole, failed to relate properly to Adonai and each other (Genesis 1-11). Now, the new plan calls for building a nation—from the descendants of one man—that will be characterized by justice and righteousness. In this manner, this nation will be a blessing to all mankind, showing them the One and Only True Elohim.
2. This interpretation is further strengthened when you consider that the Holy One's choice of Abram was not the first time He tried to work through an individual to bring mankind to proper knowledge of Himself. Remember Noah? Mankind had become so wicked that He destroyed everyone except Noah and his family, in hopes that mankind would properly relate to Him and each other through the example of Noah and his descendants.

Interpreting the Events of Abram's Life Thematically

- I. As we begin to interpret the narratives of the Torah thematically, we will see wisdom like never before. So what do I mean by "interpreting the Torah thematically?" I mean this—we need to learn how to interpret the events of the Torah primarily in light of its own dominant themes. Let's see a few examples.
 - A. Read [Genesis 12:1-3](#). These verses set the thematic framework for the Holy One's dealings with Abram and his descendants. What is the Divine game plan in Genesis 12:1-3?²⁰ What is the significance of the land mentioned in Genesis 12:1 and promised in Genesis 12:7?²¹ As we can see, the game plan depends on two things—land and descendants. In other words, the Divine plan can only be fulfilled if 1) Abraham has lots of descendants and 2) those descendants have a land they can call their own.
 - B. Now read [Genesis 12:5b-10](#), especially noting verse ten. Okay, in light of the Divine game plan and the importance of having land for this future nation (in other words, using this knowledge as a filter through which to interpret the narrative), what is the significance of the famine of Genesis 12:10?²² Now think of this. Abram brought over three hundred servants with him from Mesopotamia! They followed him, trusting in his ability to hear the Holy One's call. They traveled such a long distance and finally arrived in the "Promised **Land**." They began to walk in it and "kick the tires," so-to-speak. Then, a famine—and they had to leave at that! Some Promised **Land**, huhh? It can't even support Abram and those belonging to him, let alone an entire nation. Do you get

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [11]: The concept of a chosen family was not introduced with Noah.

Lekh Lekha 10/28/2013 3:08 AM

Comment [12]: In Genesis 1-11 Adonai is dealing with mankind on a universal level, whereas in Genesis 12-50 He is dealing with an individual and his descendants.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [13]: The Holy One is going to make Abram's descendants into a mighty nation that will be a blessing to the entire world.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [14]: This is the land that will be inhabited by the future nation of Abram's descendants who will be a blessing to the entire world.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [15]: The famine of Genesis 12:10 is in direct opposition to the promise Abram received in Genesis 12:1 and 7!

the picture? This is a test!!! The Holy One is testing Abram. Will he really hold on to My promise of the land? Well, let's see. How about a little famine? Will that deter him in his effort to trust Me?

- C. Well, it seemed that Abram happily packed his U-Haul and moved to Egypt. But now what? Read [Genesis 12:11-15](#). What is the real significance of this story (the taking of Sarai by Pharaoh) in lieu of the Divine game plan?²³ That's right! How can he father a nation when Pharaoh has taken his wife and married her? So, Chaverim, as you can see, this is test number two! © And what are the two issues of these two tests? Land and seed—those essential elements of the Divine game plan. Only by interpreting the events in Abram's life through the thematic filter of the Divine plan are we able to see the true significance of the famine and Pharaoh's actions. Both events are at direct odds with the objective and promise of establishing a nation characterized by justice and righteousness, and are, therefore, seen as tests of Abram's faith. No wonder Abram is called the Father of Faith. As you continue to study the Torah, remember to try to interpret each event according to the major themes of the Scriptures.
- II. Read [Genesis 13:1-18](#). Have you noted that as of Genesis 13:18, Abram still doesn't have any descendants? In fact, don't you think he's beginning to wonder about this “descendants becoming a great nation” stuff?
- A. What is the real significance of the story of the parting of ways of Lot and Abram? Can we interpret this story thematically with respect to Land and/or Seed? Yes, we can. But let's review a few facts you may not have considered.
- B. Do you realize that Lot has no father? Do you realize that Abram has no son? Do you realize that Lot is Abram's nephew? Furthermore, do you realize that Lot has been following Abram through all of his journeys—you know, Lot the blood relative (who has no father) of Abram (who has no biological son). Now put on your thematic thinking caps. Considering that Abram has not fathered his own biological heir and considering that he knows Adonai will make of him a great nation, what might Abram be thinking concerning The Promise and Lot?²⁴ Is this far-fetched? I think not. Consider the following. In Genesis 15:1-3, Abram, frustrated that he still had no son, reckoned that Eliezer would be his inheritor! Therefore, why not assume that he may have thought the same concerning Lot—an actual blood relative, whom it seems he may have even “adopted.”
- C. Therefore, the story of *the parting of ways between Lot and Abram represents another test for Abram*. He may have thought that Lot, his blood relative, was going to be the agent through whom the nation would arise, just as later, he thought Eliezer would be.
- III. Read [Genesis 14:1-24](#), especially Genesis 14:21-24. After defeating the four kings, Abram is approached by the king of Sodom (representing the coalition of five kings) who makes a proposition. Abram refused the proposition. This had always puzzled me until I read an article by Rav Chanoch Waxman, which touched on this story. Rav Waxman states:

“According to the standard way these things work, Avraham, the savior of the Canaanite principalities, should be accepted as ruler by the Canaanites, here in the “Valley of the King” in front of the representative of the high God [Melchisedec]. At the very least, some sort of tribute should be paid to Avraham and something akin to a noble-vassal relationship sealed by a formal treaty should be established. The King of Sedom plays his role perfectly. He offers Avraham all the booty of the war as the first part of a treaty initiative. However, Avraham refuses all reward. Only food for his allies is required. He turns down all reward, all formal relationship with Sedom and its coalition, and any hint of treaty and sovereignty (14:23-24).

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [16]: The famine of Genesis 12:10 is in direct opposition to the promise Abram received in Genesis 12:1 and 7!

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [17]: Abram may be thinking that *The Promise* will be fulfilled through Lot!

In point of fact, Avraham turns down reward and treaty not just with Sedom, its allies and locality, but implicitly with a far vaster grouping and area. A careful reading of Chapter Fourteen yields the following conclusion. The four kings, who originate in Mesopotamia, travel across the eastern bank of the Jordan, carrying out numerous battles along the way. Near the southern end of the Dead Sea, they smite the five kings and then continue north towards Damascus through the west bank of the Jordan. They are on their way home. No more battles ensue. Their power and control is unchallenged; they are the rulers of the entire land of Canaan. In a certain sense, Avraham's defeat of the kings and his rescue of the Canaanites constitutes military hegemony over the entire region. It generates the possibility of reward, treaty and control over the entire area.²⁵

As you can see, understanding the customs of the era sheds more light on the story. Now, let's interpret this story through the thematic lenses of the Divine plan of land and descendants.

- A. According to Rav Waxman, what is the name of the region Abram could have had "**treaty and control over**" because of his military victory over the four kings?²⁶ However, Abram refused any type of reward from the coalition of five kings! Can you explain the real thematic significance of his refusal?²⁷ Wow! Can you imagine that? Abram can justifiably take control over the entire land of Canaan, after having won control of it in his battle with the five kings. But instead of getting ahead of the Divine plan, he decided to wait until the Holy One did as He said He would do—For to you ***I will give it*** (Genesis 13:17).
- B. I know I may sound like a broken record; however, this was yet another test for Abram. Will he wait for the promise to be fulfilled, or will he be impatient? He passed again. And what a statement of faith were his actions!

The Prophetic Lives of the Patriarchs

- I. At this point in our studies, I want to emphasize that the Torah is a prophetic revelation. It has as much to do with the future as with its own time period. As you begin to see the prophetic and Messianic significance of the Torah, you will wonder how anyone could believe that it had been *abolished*, as is so popularly taught nowadays. In order to demonstrate the prophetic nature of the Torah, we will analyze Genesis 12:10-20—the account of Abram's *descent* into Egypt. Why was this story recorded? Was this just a story about Abram's journeys? No. Although this story stands alone as a true historical event of the past, it also had *prophetic significance*. Let's see how.
- A. Read [Genesis 12:10-20](#). Do any of the events in this descent into Egypt remind you of events that occurred later in the lives of Abram's descendants?
- Does leaving Canaan because of a famine sound familiar?
 - Does the fact that the Holy One "plagued Pharaoh and his house" sound familiar?
 - How about the fact that Abram left Egypt laden with material goods from Pharaoh?

In case these questions don't ring a bell, think of the children of Israel in Egyptian bondage. Do you realize that Jacob and his son's had to descend into Egypt because of a famine? Do you realize that the Holy One sent plagues against Egypt in order to free Israel because of Pharaoh's oppression? Furthermore, do you realize that when the children of Israel left

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [18]: Parashat Lekh Lekha, "By What Shall I Know?" by Rav Chanock Waxman, <http://www.vbm-torah.org/parsha.62/031lekhlekha.htm>.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [19]: The entire land of Canaan.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [20]: Yes. Abram knew the Holy One had promised the land of Canaan to him and his descendants. According to Genesis 13:17, Adonai promised to ***give*** the land to Abram! Therefore, Abram's refusal was another staggering statement of his faith in the Holy One to live up to His promise!

Egypt, they plundered them of their possessions? A few years ago, as I began to ponder these apparent coincidences, the Father showed me the following prophetic significance of this story. All you need to do is see Our Father Abraham as a picture of Father YHVH and Sarai as a picture of Am Yisrael (the people of Israel).

- Just as Abram is **married** to Sarai, The Holy One is **married** to Am Yisrael.
- A **famine** in Canaan caused Abram to **descend** with Sarai **into Egypt**. In Genesis 42:5, it is a **famine** in Canaan that led Jacob to send his sons to Egypt, which ultimately caused the entire family to **descend into Egypt**.
- Abram went to Egypt to **sojourn** there. The children of Israel "**sojourned**" in Egypt.
- The famine of Genesis 12 and Genesis 42 were both characterized as very **severe**.
- Before arriving in Egypt, Abram convinced Sarai to change her identity. Thus, when they arrive, the Egyptians **do not know Sarai is Abram's wife**. In the story of the Exodus, initially, the Egyptians **do not know that Am Yisrael are the people of The Holy One, married to Him**.
- Just as Pharaoh tried to **take Sarai for his own possession** by forcing her to marry him, eventually it was Pharaoh who **took Am Yisrael as his possession** by enslaving them.
- The Holy One sent **plagues** on Pharaoh and his household **because of his possession of Sarai**. In the Exodus account, the Holy One used **plagues** against Pharaoh and the land of **Egypt because he possessed (through slavery) Am Yisrael**. In both cases, the result was the release of the bride.
- When Abram left Egypt, he **left with much wealth** which he had acquired because of Sarai. When the children of Israel left Egypt, **they left with much wealth which they had taken from the Egyptians**.

Now, why do you think all these thematic connections exist? Do you think this was just a mere coincidence? Of course not. As you can plainly see, this event in the life of Abram was 1) a prophetic picture of the future descent of his descendants into the land of Egypt, 2) their enslavement and 3) their redemption! To see this revelation, you need to study its major themes.²⁸ Now let's see what we can learn from this discovery.

- II. We have just seen that the Torah's portrayal of Abram's descent into Egypt was actually a prophecy of the descent of his descendants into Egypt. In other words. This story/narrative is actually a prophecy! We usually think of a prophecy as something verbal. However, in this example, we see that a prophecy can occur as an act/event. Now, if the Torah does this one time, do you think that perhaps some of the other stories in the book of Genesis may be prophetic acts also. You betcha!
- A. There is not one subject pertaining to our faith that doesn't have its foundation in the Torah! There is one catch, though. The Torah uses types, shadows and pictures to teach many of its most important lessons. Furthermore, the details of these doctrines are presented piecemeal, in a seemingly random order—here a little, there a little (Isaiah 28:9-10). We must remember the Torah was a **shadow and pattern** of good things to come. It was written in this manner so that the Holy One could reveal its mysteries on His timetable (Ephesians 3:1-11). Therefore, when we look to the Torah, we must be aware of a few its subtleties.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [21]: The ability to see revelations like these is the reason why you need to begin to think thematically. Thinking thematically will increase your ability to see these treasures.

- The Torah will teach us its doctrines using its own prophetic methods, of which we must become aware.
 - Many of these doctrines are hidden within the stories/narrative of the Torah.
 - Our ability to see the hidden revelations within the narratives of the Torah will be increased if we learn how to study the Scriptures *thematically*.
- B. These Torah lessons will continue to build upon this concept. You will find the seed/foundation of all doctrines (doctrines of both the "Old" and "New" Testaments) within the Torah. As we study, I will try to point some of them out to you.

Making the Connection Between the Parashat HaShavuah and the Haftara

Objective—Learn how to relate Scriptures thematically, thereby learning how to think Hebraically. Become rooted in the importance of thematic analysis by seeing it in action as you relate the Torah portion to the Haftarah portion.

The Haftara reading is found in Isaiah 40:27 – 41:16. I will list some verses from the Haftarah reading. Your job will be to relate them thematically to the Parashat HaShavuah reading.

- I. If you would like to explore more information about connections between the Torah portion and the Haftarah reading then go to the link below. You will be able to download a document which will show you numerous Scriptures from the Haftarah reading so that you can determine how they are thematically connected to the Torah portion. My answers are provided as endnotes. This is an excellent exercise to help you begin thinking thematically.

Restoration of Torah Ministries' Haftarah Connections – Lekh L'kha

<http://restorationoftorah.org/images/torahportions/english/HaftarahConnectionsLekhLekha.pdf>

Messiah in the Parsha

Objective—Learn how the Torah teaches about the life and ministry of Yeshua HaMashiach. Yeshua said that Moses wrote about Him²⁹. Since the Torah never even mentions the word Messiah, this section will help you see the Messiah in the Torah. This is primarily done using thematic analysis and midrash.

Circumcision and the Messiah

- I. Earlier, we learned that Abram's descent into Egypt was actually a prophecy of the future descent of his descendants down into Egypt. We noted that narratives of the Torah are not isolated events. They are prophetic pictures. We must grasp this concept. The narratives of the Torah have more to do with the future than the past. The events of the Patriarchs are pictures of future events that will occur in the lives of their descendants. But there is more. The greatest descendant of the Patriarchs is the Messiah—Yeshua. Therefore, we should expect that some of the narratives of the Torah are actually prophetic pictures of the person and work of the Messiah! Let's see if we can see glimpses of the Messiah in this week's sidra (Torah portion).
- A. What are we to make of the sign of circumcision? It seems to be a strange sign. Read Genesis 17:9-14. Based on these verses, how serious is the covenant sign of circumcision?³⁰ What event is circumcision connected to thematically?³¹ Also, what occurs during circumcision?³² On which day is circumcision performed?³³ Using these themes (birth, the number eight and removal of flesh), let's examine other verses.
- B. Read Deuteronomy 10:16 and Deuteronomy 30:6. These verses thematically connect circumcision to our hearts! Therefore, we know that the deeper teaching concerning circumcision pertains to our hearts—the cutting away of the foreskin of our hearts. In order to help you understand the significance of circumcision, we need to skip ahead to the book of Leviticus.
- C. Note how many passages in Leviticus 12-15 deal with the subject of birth!
- Instructions concerning childbirth, Leviticus 12:1-8.
 - Instructions concerning seminal emissions, Leviticus 15:1-18.
 - Instructions concerning the menstrual cycle, Leviticus 15:19-24.
 - Circumcision on the eighth day, Leviticus 12:1-8.

Read [Leviticus 12:1-8](#) again. Notice that the instructions concerning circumcision of a *newborn* boy occur within the context (Leviticus 12-15) of numerous passages thematically connected to birth! This is more thematic evidence connecting circumcision with birth. Furthermore, note that Leviticus 13-14 deals with the metzora (leper). In other words, the passage dealing with the metzora (leper) is sandwiched between Leviticus 12 and Leviticus 15, both of which are thematically related to birth. So here's the picture.

Leviticus 12—Thematically connected to new births

Leviticus 13-14—Thematically connected to the metzora, the walking living ***DEAD***

Leviticus 15—Thematically connected to new births

- D. You'll just have to trust me for now, but when you study Parashat Metzora (Leper), you will learn the following:

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [22]: Considering that those who were not circumcised were to be cut off, it was very, very important.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [23]: Birth

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [24]: The foreskin is removed from the male organ.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [25]: On the eighth day.

- One becomes tamei (unclean), or ritually impure by sinning (e.g., disobeying the commandments), by coming into contact with death, or by some form of the loss of life.
- When one is tamei (unclean), they cannot come into Adonai's holy presence. This is absolutely forbidden. You can only approach Adonai when you are tahor (ritually clean).
- Tzara'at is an affliction visited upon a person by Adonai.
- The metzora (leper) was a picture of **THE WALKING, LIVING DEAD!** That's right. If we want to see what death is like, then we look to the metzora (leper), who was totally cut off from the presence of Adonai in the Mishkan, as well as all human relationships.
- According to the Torah, the primary work of the Messiah is to bring Life where there is Death. He is in the resurrection business!

E. If the metzora (leper) is a picture of death, then what type of healing does he need?³⁴ That's right. In fact, one could say he needs to be resurrected or **born again** (hint). On which day was the metzora (leper) cleansed?³⁵ Do you see the picture? The metzora (leper), a picture of death, needs to be given **new life** or **born again**. This cleansing unto **new life** occurred on the **eighth day**, the same day that a **newborn** male child was **circumcised**. The number eight thematically connects **circumcision** to **new birth!** As we continue these lessons, we will see continue to see how the Torah uses numbers to teach us thematic lessons.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [26]: He needs LIFE! The dead need to be resurrected.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [27]: He needs LIFE!

II. Now read [Colossians 2:11-13](#). Let's note how many ways these verses are thematically connected to what we've already learned in part I of *Messiah in the Torah*.

- The sign of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision of the flesh. These verses speak of a spiritual circumcision., putting off the body of the sins of the flesh)
- Leviticus taught us that the metzora (leper) needed to be born again or given life (resurrected). Furthermore, the Torah thematically connected this process to circumcision because both occurred on the eighth day. Colossians 2:13 teaches us that when our hearts were uncircumcised we were dead! Furthermore, it teaches us that the circumcision of our hearts has "given us life together with Him (the Messiah)!" See how the Torah pictured all of this?

- A. And when do all of the events of Colossians 2:11-13 occur?³⁶ Chaverim, the covenant sign of circumcision is how the Torah teaches us about the necessity of being born again! And Colossians 2:11 states that Yeshua performs the circumcision of our hearts.
- B. Read [Romans 2:28-29](#). Once again, we see that circumcision in the flesh was a picture of circumcision of the heart—being born again! The concept of circumcision of the heart is clearly understood in the "Old Testament"—see Deuteronomy 10:16 and 30:6. We've seen how circumcision was thematically connected to new birth through the number eight. Hopefully, you can now understand why Yeshua was surprised that Nicodemus didn't understand the concept of being born again. It's already taught (as a shadow) in the Torah. ☺

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [28]: Whenever someone is born again!!!

Of Faith and Righteousness

I. Many people erroneously think that the Jewish people were saved by keeping the law (Torah). Their thinking goes like this. The Torah was given to the Jews for them to keep. Its purpose was to teach mankind that no one could keep Adonai's standard of righteousness. Now that Yeshua has come, there is no longer any need for the Torah. Its requirements are already fulfilled in us through Yeshua. As you know, one of the main reasons I have taken the time to develop these lessons is so that you can see the harmony of the Torah and the B'rit Chadasha (New Covenant Scriptures). There aren't two different standards of righteousness depending on whether you lived before or after the resurrection of the Messiah. Let's examine the teaching concerning faith and works from the Torah and the B'rit Chadasha so that we can see that they are one in the same.

- A. Read [Genesis 15:1-6](#). Which two great Scriptural topics are thematically linked in Genesis 15:6?³⁷ What promise did Abraham exercise faith in?³⁸ Note, the Scripture states that because of Abraham's faith, righteousness was imputed to him. What's most important to note here is the thematic connection between faith and righteousness. Does this verse say anything about obedience and righteousness? No. This is a foundational verse, teaching us that we are made righteous through faith, not by obeying works of the Torah. It is extremely significant because this foundational issue is first taught in the Torah, not the B'rit Chadasha! Therefore, it is impossible that the Torah was given so that we could obtain righteousness through obedience.
- B. The fact is that all men are born sinful and all men have sinned. Therefore, it is impossible for us to be made righteous on our own. Furthermore, since we have all sinned, in order for us to be made righteous, we must first be acquitted or forgiven of our sins. This process is called justification. We must be justified from all of our past wrong doings. Read [Habakkuk 2:4](#). What two Scriptural doctrines are thematically linked in this verse?³⁹ Once again, we see the importance of faith. Justification from our past wrongs requires faith, just as we need faith to be imputed righteousness. Here's the main point the Torah is trying to teach. When one believes in the promise of the Holy One, his faith is counted as righteousness.

II. Now let's see what the B'rit Chadasha has to say about these subjects.

- A. Read [Romans 1:1-2](#). What has Paul been set apart to preach? The Gospel. And what is the source of Paul's gospel?⁴⁰ Do you see the significance of Paul's statements? He is plainly stating that the gospel he preaches has its source/roots/origins, etc., in the Tanakh!
- B. Now read [Romans 1:16-17](#). In these verses, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 as the source of the foundation of the gospel of Messiah.
- C. How many times does Paul mention the word gospel in Romans 1-2?⁴¹ Do you think he's trying to be clear concerning the topic of his epistle? I think so.
- D. We have already seen that Paul is looking to the Torah as his source for the gospel. Furthermore, we have already seen that the Torah thematically links faith and righteousness/justification. Read [Romans 1-4](#). Do you realize how many times Paul thematically links faith and righteousness/justification?⁴² Now read [Romans 4](#). This entire chapter is devoted to proving to you and I that mankind is justified and made righteous only through his faith. And where did Paul get this idea?⁴³ Paul clearly sees Abraham's faith as a teaching lesson or picture of how all people are justified and made righteous—all men, both Old and New Testament.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [29]: Faith and Righteousness.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [30]: The promise that the Holy One would give him a son. Through this son, the Holy One would fulfill His promise concerning making Abraham into a mighty nation.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [31]: Faith and justification.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [32]: The Tanakh, or the entirety of the "Old Testament."

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [33]: Five times!

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [34]:

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [35]: Right from our sidra Parashat Lekh Lekha in Genesis 15:6.

In summary, both the Torah and the B'rit Chadasha teach us that faith leads to righteousness/justification. Obedience to the Torah will not justify anyone. Neither will good works of any other kind. The only way for man to be made righteous is through faith in the promise of the Holy One. In a nutshell, when man offers faith, the Holy One offers righteousness. And that's gospel!

Of Obedience and Life/Blessing

I. Someone may then ask, "So what is the purpose of obedience to the Torah?" Good question. We already know that it does not lead to righteousness. The best place to learn the purpose for obedience to the Torah is the book of Deuteronomy. This subject will be dealt with at length when you study the book of Devarim; however, here is a quick summary of the purpose of obedience to the Torah.

- A. Let's proceed as we did above when we looked for a foundational teaching concerning how one is made righteous. We simply looked for a verse that addressed the issue of how one obtains righteousness from the Holy One. Genesis 15:6 was our first hit. Well, let's see what the Torah has to say about obedience. When man offers obedience, what does the Holy One offer?
- B. Read [Genesis 18:18-19](#). What does the Holy One state concerning obedience pertaining to Abraham and his descendants?⁴⁴ Here we see the first part of the equation—The offering of obedience by man. This verse clearly states that Abram will command his offspring to obey Adonai. And what will be the Holy One's response? What will He offer to Abraham's descendants in response to their obedience? Is it righteousness?⁴⁵ Do you see that? Man offers obedience, while the Holy One offers blessing! It's that simple. Want to see it again?
- C. Read [Genesis 22:16-18](#)—

and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, *because you have done this thing* [i.e., obeyed], and have not withheld your son, your only son--¹⁷*blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants* as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and *your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies*.¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, *because you have obeyed My voice* (Genesis 22:16-18)."

Wow!!! Once again, we see that Abraham offered obedience to the commandment and the Holy One offered profound blessing! Chaverim, the Torah is trying to teach us that obedience leads to blessing, not righteousness! Still not convinced? Let's go to the book of Deuteronomy.

- D. The fundamental function/purpose of the Torah (at the Pashat level) is to secure/ensure/give physical LIFE (the greatest form of blessing) to those who **OBEDY** it. See also [Devarim 4:1, 4 and 10](#), [Devarim 5:33](#), [Devarim 6:24](#), [Devarim 8:1 and 3](#), [Devarim 30:19](#), [Leviticus 26:3-13](#), [Ezekiel 20:11, 13, 21 and 25](#), and more! Read [Devarim 4:1-4](#). Note the familiar phrase, *statutes and judgments*. Why does Moses state he is giving them statutes and judgments—hint, note the important phrase, *so that you may*?⁴⁶ Here we see the fundamental purpose/function of the Torah. This verse informs us **WHY** Moses gave them the Torah—*so that they may LIVE!* Therefore, obedience to

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [36]: He stated that Abraham will command his children to "keep the way of the LORD," i.e., to obey the LORD.

Lekh Lekha 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [37]: No. He promised to "bring upon him that which He had spoken," i.e., the covenant promises of blessing found in Genesis 12:1-3!

Va'etchannan 2/6/2006 10:23 PM

Comment [38]: SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE AND POSSESS THE LAND.

Torah is a matter of physical **Life** and **Death**! It is so important, he tells them in Devarim 4:2 that they are not to add or take away from the Torah.

- E. Now Moses is going to give them an object lesson in [Devarim 4:3-4](#). An object lesson is given to teach the hearers something. Why does Moses give the example of Baal Peor, stating that those who clung to Him are **ALIVE**, whereas those who followed Baal Peor were **DESTROYED**?⁴⁷ Chaverim (friends), I don't want to sound pessimistic, sarcastic or condescending, but I don't think it can get any simpler than this. First, Moses gives the fundamental purpose of the Torah—to provide **LIFE** to those who obey it. Then, because this is a very important matter, a matter of **LIFE** and **DEATH**, he stated that the commandments of the Torah aren't to be changed. Then he gave a real-life example of how those who obeyed the Torah in a particular incident received **LIFE**, whereas those who disobeyed the Torah received **DEATH**.
- F. Read [Devarim 6:1-2](#). What is the purpose for keeping the Torah in the land—hint, note the phrase, *so that*?⁴⁸ Should this surprise us? No.
- G. Read [Devarim 6:17-19](#). Why must Am Yisrael keep the commandments, statutes and judgments?⁴⁹

In summary, we have seen that Adonai told Am Yisrael the reason **WHY** they should obey the Torah. The primary reason they were to obey the Torah was so that they would have **LIFE** and possess the land! Since the Holy One gave Am Yisrael the Torah, we should easily conclude that its purpose/function was to be a source of **LIFE** for those who obeyed it. It was given as a gift from the Holy One to the people He chose and loved. It's as simple as that. The Torah's primary purpose/function is to be a source of **BLESSING, LIFE**, reward, goodness, etc. Moses has been (and will continue to be) very forthright and explicit in explaining **WHY** Am Yisrael should obey the Torah. It has nothing to do with **MAKING** them righteous before the Holy One. At the literal or Pashat level of interpretation, it's a matter of physical **LIFE/BLESSING** and **DEATH**! It is a source of **BLESSING**. Did he ever say he gave them statutes and judgments to save them? Did he ever say he gave them statutes and judgments so that they would be in bondage? Did he ever say he gave them statutes and judgments so that they would see how utterly sinful they were? Did he ever say He gave them the Torah so that through obedience He would impute righteousness to them? Did he ever say he gave them statutes and judgments so that they would see that they could never keep His "Laws"? No, no, no, no. He gave Am Yisrael the Torah so that they could experience physical **LIFE**, especially in Eretz Yisrael!

Always remember the following lessons *taught by the Torah* and you will never go wrong.

- Faith leads to righteousness and justification.
- Obedience leads to life and blessing.

Va'etchannan

Comment [39]: To prove to them that those who obey the Torah receive **LIFE**.

Va'etchannan 2/6/2006 10:22 PM

Comment [40]: The purpose for keeping the commandments in the land is so that Am Yisrael will prolong their days (i.e., LIVE A LONG LIFE) in the Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel).

Va'etchannan 2/6/2006 10:22 PM

Comment [41]: So that it will go well with them (i.e., you'll have a good LIFE) and so that they'll possess the land.

Fun For the Whole Family!

Okay, time to show what you've learned. I've included Word Searches and a Crossword puzzle for you to test your understanding. The ***Word Search For Adults*** is a word search for older children and adults. All of the words (20-30) are taken from this week's sidra (portion) and some of the words may be common Hebrew words or English phrases. The ***Cross Word Puzzle*** is also for older children and adults and may contain common Hebrew words or English phrases also. There is also a ***Word Search for the little guys!*** And of course, I've included the answer key for the cross word puzzle :)

- **Adult Crossword Puzzle** – This is a crossword puzzle for older children and adults. <http://www.restorationofatorah.org/images/torahportions/puzzles/LekhLekhaAdultXWP.pdf>
- **Crossword Puzzle Answers** – This contains answers for the cross word puzzle <http://www.restorationofatorah.org/images/torahportions/puzzles/LekhLekhaAdultXWPAnswers.pdf>
- **Adult Word Search** – This is a word search for older children and adults. <http://www.restorationofatorah.org/images/torahportions/puzzles/LekhLekhaAdultWS.pdf>
- **Children's Word Search** – This is a word search for younger children. <http://www.restorationofatorah.org/images/torahportions/puzzles/LekhLekhaChildrensWS.pdf>

Shabbat Shalom!

¹ Shabbat is Hebrew for Sabbath.

² In its most limited form, the Torah comprises the first five books of Moses.

³ Holy Spirit.

⁴ Parashat HaShavuah, or weekly Parashat, are the weekly readings from the Torah. Each week, beginning on the Shabbat, we read specific selections from the Torah, such that we complete the entire Torah each year.

⁵ Tanakh is the entirety of what is commonly called the Old Testament. It is a Hebrew acronym taken from the three major divisions of the Tanakh: the Torah, Prophets (Neviim) and Writings (Khetuvim).

⁶ Brit Chadasha is commonly known as the New Testament Scriptures.

⁷ This paragraph-like division is called a Parsha (Parshiot, plural).

⁸ Relocation to become a nation.

⁹ The land of Canaan.

¹⁰ A famine in the land of Canaan caused them to descend into Egypt.

¹¹ The ***land*** could not support them dwelling together (Genesis 13:6).

- ¹² The major theme is the land. The secondary theme is descendants.
- ¹³ The dominant theme of Genesis 15:1-6 is *descendants*. The dominant theme of Genesis 15:7-21 is the *land!*
- ¹⁴ Descendants. Why? Because Abram and Sarai are trying to figure a way that Abram can have descendants so that the Holy One's promises will be fulfilled.
- ¹⁵ The promise of a son so that Abram can have a multitude of descendants.
- ¹⁶ They all involve the general theme of sin and punishment.
- ¹⁷ In Genesis 1-11 Adonai is dealing with mankind on a universal level, whereas in Genesis 12-50 He is dealing with an individual and his descendants.
- ¹⁸ The concept of a chosen family was not introduced with Noah.
- ¹⁹ They both mention the fact that Abram's descendants will be a blessing to all nations of the earth.
- ²⁰ The Holy One is going to make Abram's descendants into a mighty nation that will be a blessing to the entire world.
- ²¹ This is the land that will be inhabited by the future nation of Abram's descendants who will be a blessing to the entire world.
- ²² The famine of Genesis 12:10 is in direct opposition to the promise Abram received in Genesis 12:1 and 7!
- ²³ Pharaoh's actions (taking Sarai as a wife) will prevent Abram from having seed to establish the great nation!
- ²⁴ Abram may be thinking that *The Promise* will be fulfilled through Lot!
- ²⁵ Parashat Lekh Lekha, "By What Shall I Know?" by Rav Chanock Waxman, <http://www.vbm-torah.org/parsha.62/031lekhlekha.htm>.
- ²⁶ The entire land of Canaan.
- ²⁷ Yes. Abram knew the Holy One had promised the land of Canaan to him and his descendants. According to Genesis 13:17, Adonai promised to *give* the land to Abram! Therefore, Abram's refusal was another staggering statement of his faith in the Holy One to live up to His promise!
- ²⁸ The ability to see revelations like these is the reason why you need to begin to think thematically. Thinking thematically will increase your ability to see these treasures.
- ²⁹ Yeshua said in John 5:46 that Moses spoke about him. Psalm 40:6-8, speaking of the Messiah said that the book is written about Him. Paul said that all of the feasts were prophetic shadows of Messiah Yeshua.
- ³⁰ Considering that those who were not circumcised were to be cut off, it was very, very important.
- ³¹ Birth.
- ³² The foreskin is removed from the male organ.
- ³³ On the eighth day.
- ³⁴ He needs LIFE! The dead need to be resurrected.

³⁵ The eighth day!

³⁶ Whenever someone is born again!!!

³⁷ Faith and Righteousness.

³⁸ The promise that the Holy One would give him a son. Through this son, the Holy One would fulfill His promise concerning making Abraham into a mighty nation.

³⁹ Faith and justification.

⁴⁰ The Tanakh, or the entirety of the "Old Testament."

⁴¹ Five times!

⁴² At least 14 times!

⁴³ Right from our sidra Parashat Lekh Lekha in Genesis 15:6.

⁴⁴ He stated that Abraham will command his children to "keep the way of the LORD," i.e., to obey the LORD.

⁴⁵ No. He promised to "bring upon him that which He had spoken," i.e., the covenant promises of blessing found in Genesis 12:1-3!

⁴⁶ **SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE AND POSSESS THE LAND.**

⁴⁷ To prove to them that those who obey the Torah receive **LIFE**.

⁴⁸ The purpose for keeping the commandments in the land is so that Am Yisrael will prolong their days (i.e., LIVE A LONG LIFE) in the Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel).

⁴⁹ So that it will go well with them (i.e., you'll have a good LIFE) and so that they'll possess the land.